

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

**Chief John R. Batiste**

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**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

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## ***Click it or Ticket!***

**Starting May 15 the WSP will join other law enforcement agencies to look for unbuckled drivers!**

Between **May 15 and June 3**, The Washington State Patrol will be teaming up with other law enforcement officers throughout Washington State to look for drivers who aren't buckled up during the Click it or Ticket campaign.

During the last three years of May Click it or Ticket emphasis patrols, **30,749** seat belt tickets have been written statewide and last May, law enforcement officers cited **10,107** non-seatbelt wearers. The ticket for not wearing a seatbelt carries a fine of \$101.

In August 2001, before the primary seat belt law went into effect, approximately 83% of drivers wore seatbelts. Thankfully, today we have the second highest seatbelt compliance rates in the nation **(95.2%)**. Studies show that seat belts reduce serious injuries by 69% and deaths by 45% - 70%.

After the adoption of the Click it or Ticket project and the primary enforcement seat belt law, the vehicle occupant death number dropped from 517 in 2002 to 419 in 2004 – nearly 100 lives were saved due to increases in seat belt use. Traffic safety officials estimate that for every fatality avoided, about four serious injuries are avoided as well.

"The evidence is overwhelming that seatbelts save lives," explained WSP Chief John R. Batiste. "Our ultimate goal is to save lives, and we hope that our renewed effort to remind drivers in Washington to buckle up will reduce the injuries and fatalities on our roadways."

Troopers in Southwest Washington (District 5) are preparing for the upcoming "Traffic Safety Blitz" by dedicating additional troopers to patrol the interstate and state routes enforcing traffic laws with special attention being paid to speed, aggressive driving, safety restraint violations and DUI.

In the 5 counties, (Clark, Lewis, Cowlitz, Skamania and Klickitat), a total of approximately 595 hours of overtime funded by the Washington Traffic Safety Commission will be utilized between May 15th and June 3rd to put extra shifts out on the highways.

Each of the detachments in the five counties will spread the additional hours out over the time period with those officers on the overtime hours focusing on traffic violations and not responding to calls for service except in an emergency.

One traveling enforcement team consisting of 4 Troopers and a Sergeant will be working the Clark, Cowlitz and Lewis County areas at various times during this period. The State Patrol Aircraft is being brought down to work speed in the Clark, Lewis and Cowlitz county areas as well. Troopers in Klickitat and Skamania counties will be working extra shifts in their areas as well.

"Traffic Safety Blitz" runs from May 15<sup>th</sup> through June 3rd.

In **2005** during enforcement period:

Troopers in District 5 arrested **165 DUI's**, issued **1,042 seatbelt tickets**, wrote **2,545 speeding tickets** and **contacted 1,542 aggressive drivers**. There was **130 drug related arrests** and **84 people arrested on warrants**.

It has shown that people who are caught not wearing their seatbelt usually leads to some other violations. A good example was Trooper Steve Robley arrested two drivers for DUI when he stopped them for not wearing seatbelts.

On May 8, 2006 at approximately 3:05 pm, Trooper Robley observed the driver of a silver Ford pickup not wearing his seatbelt as he was traveling northbound on SR-503 at Milepost 4. The driver Norman K. Jones, a 68 year old resident of Brush Prairie was arrested for DUI after he was found to under the influence of alcohol.

Mr. Jones was cited for DUI and Seatbelt violation.

On May 9, 2006 at approximately 6:38 am, Trooper Robley observed the driver of a blue Ford pickup not wearing his seatbelt as he was traveling northbound on SR-503 at NE 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The driver Terry L. Ek, a 22 year old resident of Vancouver was arrested for DUI after he was found to be under the influence of alcohol.

Mr. Ek was cited for DUI and Seatbelt violation.

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